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Community Needs Assessment

What is a community needs assessment?

A community needs assessment is the process used to help gather information about your community and its needs, resources, strengths and challenges. All of these things will help your club determine the type of projects what will best serve the real needs of your community.

How do you conduct a community needs assessment?

These assessments can be completed in a variety of different ways including:

- *Interviews*: interviews are a good way to get insight into issues in the community because you have an opportunity to speak directly with people. These people may be community leaders, organization representatives or community members at large.
- *Surveys*: you can create a survey/questionnaire to hand out to members of the community, have them available in places where there is a lot of traffic to get the best results (i.e. local community centre, fitness centre, grocery store, etc.)
- *Public Forum*: attending community meetings is a great way to get insight into the community and where improvements could be made or needs met. This is also an opportunity to hold an open forum of your own and invite people to come in and discuss issues in the community that could use your clubs support.
- *Focus Groups*: Focus groups are a great way to get specific people together to discuss issues; you can use this opportunity to connect with local leaders, organization representatives and active members of the community. These types of people will be able to provide great feedback as to what types of projects your clubs can do and the areas that need support.

Note:

Remember when conducting a community needs assessment to take into account the things your community does well and the resources that are available. These things will help with project selection too as they can provide support to the project.

What information should be gathered from the community needs assessment?

Through your community needs assessment there are a few key pieces of information that should be gathered including:

- Identifying needs
- Current action being taken to meet these needs
- Resources available
- List of local organizations already involved in working towards meeting the need
- Challenges that would need to be overcome to meet the need
- Ability to run a project to help meet the need
- Community involvement
- Ability to sustain support for the need

Once all of your information is gathered you will have the foundation needed to brainstorm types of projects that would be most effective in meeting the greatest need of your community.